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A C H A R G E

DELIVERED AT

THE ORDINARY VISITATION

OF THE

ARCHDEACONRY OF CHICHESTER

IN JULY, 1841.

BY

HENRY EDWARD MANNING, M.A.,

ARCHDEACON OF CHICHESTER.

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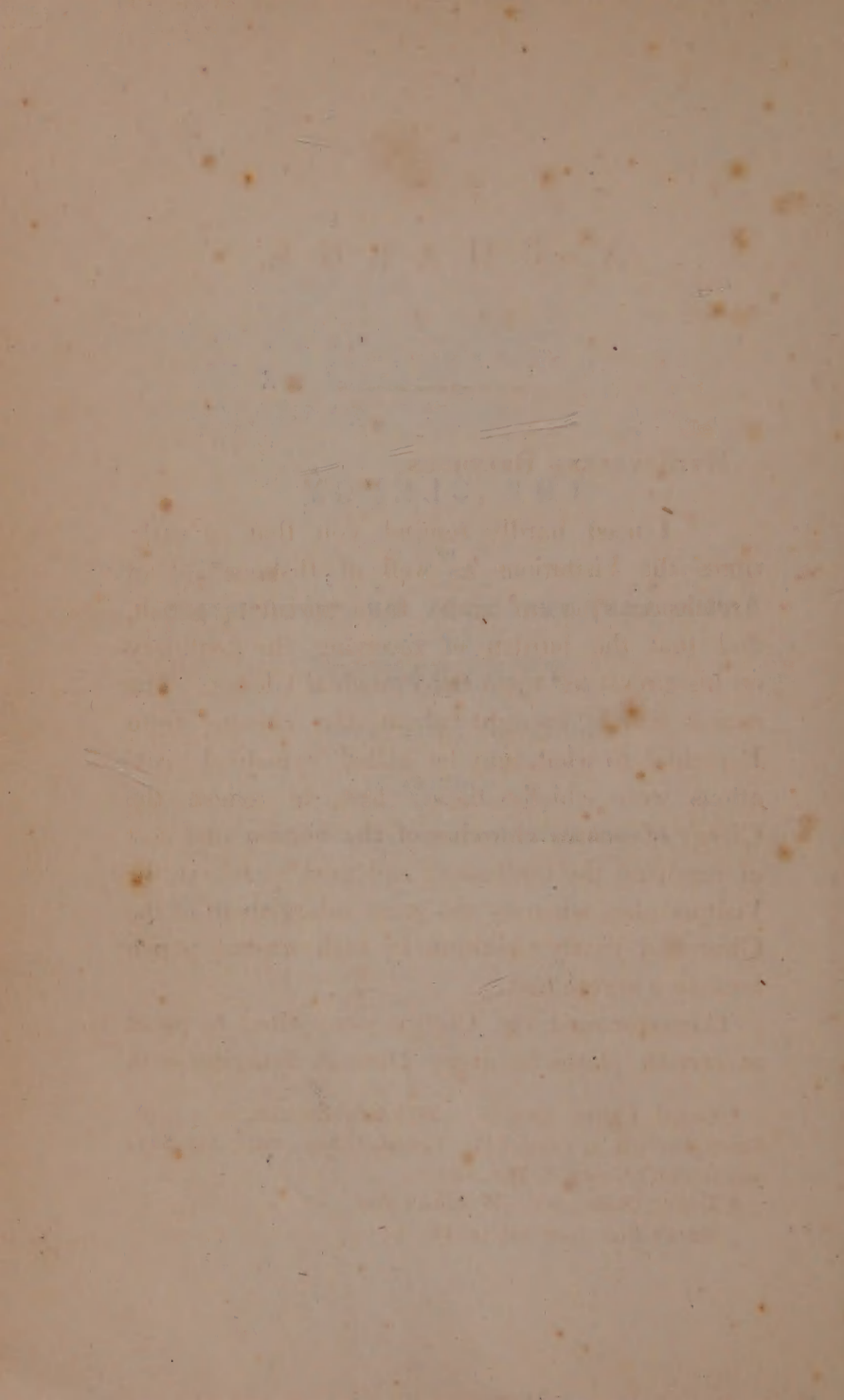
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TO
THE CLERGY
OF
THE ARCHDEACONRY OF CHICHESTER,
THIS CHARGE,
PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST,
IS INSCRIBED
BY THEIR AFFECTIONATE BROTHER AND SERVANT,

H. E. M.



A C H A R G E,

&c. &c.

MY REVEREND BRETHREN,

I need hardly remind you that in early times the Visitations as well of Bishops* as of Archdeacons† were made from parish to parish, and that the burden of receiving the Ordinary on his circuit fell upon the Parochial Clergy. The causes which brought about the change from Parochial to what may be called Synodical visitations were chiefly these: first, to relieve the Clergy of poorer churches of the burden and cost of receiving the Ordinary; and next, to relieve the Visitors also, when by the great enlargement of the Church a yearly visitation in each several parish became a severe task.‡

Thenceforward the Clergy were cited to meet at certain places in every Diocese, bringing with

* Concil. Cloves, Can. iii. Wilkins's Concilia, tom. i. 95. Concil. Calcyth. iii.; ibid. 147. Constit. Othon., xxii.; ibid. 654; and Gibson's Codex, 957, 8, note c.

† Const. Othon., xx. Wilkins, i. 654.

‡ Burn's Eccl. Law, vol. iv. 15.

them the Churchwardens, and certain other men of known character, as witnesses (*testes synodales*) of the condition of their several parishes.* This change was the more readily made because it was the custom for the Bishop to hold his Synod twice,† and the Archdeacon his Chapter four times,‡ or even oftener, in every year. And it had been the custom, before the change was brought about, to hold sometimes a Chapter and a Parochial Visitation on the same day and at the same place:§ and for that reason the two concurrent functions of the Ordinary more readily coalesced into one Synodical act.|| In his Visitations the subject of his inquiry was the state of the church,

* Ayliffe's *Parergon*, vol. ii. 515.

† Archbp. Theod., *Canons*, 7. Wilkins, tom. i. 43. Archbp. Zouch, *Constit.* Johnson's *Canons*, 1347.

‡ Archbp. Mepham, viii. Johnson's *Canons*, 1330, note r. "Item statuimus, quod Episcopi in suis Synodis, et aliis conventionibus, et singuli Archidiaconi in suis capitulis, &c." *Constit. Bonifac.*, Lyndwood, p. 68. On these words Lyndwood observes, "Nota bene proprietatem terminorum: nam Episcopis tribuit Synodos, Archidiaconis vero capitula."

§ *Constit. Steph.*, Lyndwood, 220, and note v.

|| "Instead of a Visitation, the Archdeacon, by himself or his official, at two of his Chapters held about Easter and Michaelmas, made an inquiry into the circumstances of every parish, and continues to do so; and this inquiry began at last to be called a Visitation," &c. "And as the Archdeacon held this Capitulum or Chapter, and Visitation as it is now called, at the same time; so the Bishop held his Diocesan Synod and visited at once." Johnson's *Vade Mecum*, vol. i. 167.

and buildings belonging to it; the vessels, books, vestments, and other furniture: the state of morals, and the observance of the Ritual and Canons:—* in the Synods and Chapters his office was either legislative and judicial, as in the person of the Bishop; or judicial only, as in that of the Archdeacon.† And hence it followed that the Visitations assumed a two-fold character;‡ and that of the Archdeacon, with which we are now more especially concerned, partook of the nature of an inspection, and of a Chapter: the same two-fold functions are contained in them, and in some sort exercised, even to this day; the Clergy and Churchwardens, cited together, forming the court of the Visitation; the Clergy afterwards assembled by themselves, forming the Chapter of the Archdeacon: the appearing of the Clergy, and the exhibiting of articles and presentments by the Churchwardens, forming the business of the Visitation; and any subjects relating to the pastoral ministry on which the Clergy may desire to confer, forming the business of the Chapter.

My aim in recalling you to the original of these our solemn gatherings in this place is not to gratify any mere antiquarian curiosity, but to ascer-

* Wilkins's Concil., ii., 150, 1. Lyndwood de Offic. Archid., 42.

† Lyndwood, 51, note k. "In hoc loco non solum Archidiaconi procedunt ut inquisitores, sed ut iudices," &c. Also p. 54, note c.

‡ Ayliffe's Parergon, vol. ii. 515.

tain the real character and uses of a Visitation. In looking back on the history of these conventions of the Church, we cannot fail to be impressed with the strength and steadfastness of her unwritten usages : for these visitations stand upon the common law of England, and have their legal authority in immemorial custom.* It is a prevalent but inexact mode of dividing the several parts of law to speak of Common and Ecclesiastical as two distinct kinds. It would be more true to distinguish laws as unwritten or common law, and written or statute law ; and to comprehend among unwritten laws all immemorial customs, whether the matter of them be Civil or Ecclesiastical ;† and among the written, all statutes of Parliament and canons of the Church which, by incorporation with statutes, have become written law in these realms. We are met, then, here to-day, Brethren, not by

* Bishop Stillingfleet on the Antiquity and Legality of Archdeacons' Visitations.—“ *Usu et consuetudine*, the Archdeacons have proper and ordinary jurisdiction, &c. . . . and by virtue of this they keep courts, appoint officials, and visit churches within their jurisdiction. And that such authority the Archdeacons had here in England appears, in the time of Henry III., by several passages in Matthew Paris, and the Councils of that time ; so that this kind of jurisdiction is within the liberties of the Church confirmed by Magna Charta : for the jurisdiction and visitation of Archdeacons is set down in the Council at London, 21 Henry III.” *Miscell. Disc.*, p. 250.

† Bishop Stillingfleet on the Foundation of Ecclesiastical Jurisdiction. *Ecclesiastical Cases*, vol. ii. pp. 37, 38, 39.

voluntary compact, or by a mere rule of ecclesiastical propriety, but in obedience to the most peremptory canons of the Church embodied in the unwritten law of England.

What then I would desire to consider at this time is, how can we derive from these yearly Visitations the greatest good to the Church and to ourselves; and I would ask of you to bear with me while I take what to some may seem too formal a view of the subject; for I will not dwell on the beneficial effect of these synodical meetings on our own individual character, but upon the institutions and administration of the Church. And if it should seem to any of my Brethren that the more personal view ought to be rather chosen, as tending more directly to quicken the interior life of our ministry, I must plead in my own behalf the peculiar nature of the office in virtue of which I am called to speak at all—an office to which belongs chiefly the care and cognizance of the exterior system and administration of the Church. The higher truths which these ecclesiastical assemblies suggest belong to our common Superior. I will state then, as shortly as I can, what are the beneficial uses of which these Visitations are capable; and in so doing I shall pass over at once the obvious use and functions which the very name itself implies, and touch upon those which are rendered more than ever worthy of our regard by

the present position of the Church and people of England: and for this purpose I will remind you of what are the particular features of our present state, and then show how, as it seems to me, the most momentous powers for the counteraction of much that is adverse in the condition of the Church are to be found contained in these ecclesiastical Visitations.

In the first place, I would remind you that the English Church has not escaped the strong tide which for the last three or four hundred years has vehemently drawn the whole of Western Europe towards some strangely mingled destiny of good and evil. If we look at Christendom as a great continuous fact, we shall find it exhibiting two very remarkable and opposite inclinations. For the first fourteen hundred years there was a tenacious accumulation of all that was true, and of all that looked like truth. It would seem as if the great revelation of the Gospel had so impressed on men the belief of something heavenly in all things earthly—of some truth Divine in all the utterings of the wise and good—that they greedily and fondly grasped everything together lest anything should be lost. And hence it came to pass that the visible mass of Christendom took up into itself from age to age, and incorporated with its inferior system, the outlying traditions of secondary truths and errors, with national customs, and local rites, and the predominant

forms of particular opinions; and all this aggregation of human thought and action grew at last to a bulk at which the powers of cohesion were exhausted; so that for the last four hundred years there has been an opposite process going on. Throughout the whole of Western Europe there has been a disengaging of parts and a diminution of the bulk of the visible Church. And this process has been effected, I believe, partly through a direct and gracious administration of God's Providential Government, and partly by the sins and wilfulness of men. That the broad movement was an impulse from Heaven is as clear, to all but men inveterately blind, as that the particular direction which it has here and there received is from the swervings of the human will. This broad movement in the Western Church had its forerunning signs in a multitude of phenomena, such as the sudden and amazing energies which during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries broke forth in all forms of intellectual life. It is to be traced in the scholars, the doctors, the poets, the painters, the statesmen, and even the common characters of those ages;—what we familiarly call the revival of letters, the restoration of learning, the schools of the fine arts, together with the invention of printing, were themselves the symptoms of a mighty power leavening and impelling the whole mass of Western Europe; and became in turn the moral and mechanical causes of a still further ex-

citement and development of the intellectual and spiritual life. Among many effects of this movement, there is one which we are wont most unphilosophically and untruly to speak of, as if it were the main and isolated cause of all we see around us : I mean the Reformation. It is a very shallow and imperfect view to regard this gracious act of God's providence towards his Church as an isolated event. It was one of a series of events : itself first an effect, and afterwards a combining cause in further consequences. In the first period there was an undiscerning accumulation of things intrinsically repugnant ; in the latter a healthy process of severe and searching analysis. The movement of intellectual life, of which I have spoken, was doubtless a Divine prelude to the recovery of truth hidden in the mass. What the first delivery of the truth was (if I may reverently compare things unlike in detail, but like in their common origin and outline) to the after accumulation of error,—such was the first recovery of truth in these later times to the process of diminution and decay. The two originating acts—the one seen, the other unseen—were manifestly of God ; but the swerving and imperfection of the after consequences were as evidently of man. In the first acts of both these great periods God was putting his Church upon her probation ; in the after acts we see the Church moving upon the mysterious line of her trial.

I have shortly referred to these general truths to explain in what sense it may be said that, in the last four centuries, there has been a heavy current driving the Western Church into the midst of new and extraordinary dangers. Of these dangers the Reformation was not the cause, but the divinely prepared remedy : and as the purging of the intellectual sight of Western Europe prepared for the restoration of Apostolic truth, so the restoration of that primitive doctrine is doubtless a Divine provision made to counteract the foreseen determination of the will of man in these latter times. It is not more certain, then, that the Reformation was a gracious and searching work wrought by the purifying hand of God, than that the history of Western Europe after the Reformation exhibits an appalling process of declension, and a strange forfeiture of the powers of truth through the mystery of evil working, according to Apostolic prophecy, in these latter days.* And these remarks are not confined to any particular sects or communities abroad. They apply to all. If the Rationalistic infidelity of Germany may be traced to the Lutheran bodies, the sensual infidelity of France may be traced to the communion of the Gallican Church. The lawlessness of will and intellect is to be found in all communities, resulting, where there is energy, in formal heresy ; where there is apathy, in a sullen indifference ; and mani-

* 2 Timothy iii. 1, 2, 3, 4. Jude 8.

festing itself in all alike by a heady, high-minded vindication of the absolute independence of the will of man. The idea of a spiritual guide, divinely commissioned to rule as well as to teach, has become strange and incredible even to higher and better minds; to the temper of these latter days it is an insufferable usurpation: so that the powers of unbelief and lawlessness are the natural and direct antagonists of the Faith and Discipline of the Church; and throughout the whole of Western Christendom they will be found wasting away the characters of truth, and trampling down the rule of spiritual order. A multitude of historical proofs, and of facts seen in these days by our own eyes, will arise in your minds to satisfy you that I have not untruly described the state and tendency of foreign countries and Churches. I will therefore turn at once to the condition of the Church of England.

Perhaps in no country can be found so remarkable an exhibition of the counteracting and remedial power of the Reformation, and of the vehement tide of these latter days. We have the two extremes in full and energetic action. That the Anglican Church stands immoveably rooted in the soil of England is, under God, because she was brought back to Apostolic truth: that she has lost some portions of her administrative system is because she has shared the strife and the mutilation which all Churches have endured. But no Church in the last three hundred

years has borne what she has met and overcome. She has been slain by the secular arm nerved and guided by foreign enmity, and crushed by a lawless rebellion kindled in domestic schisms : she has been pampered by the wily protection of civil rulers, till her own internal energies were well nigh deadened, and lured by the ease and the gain of a luxurious commercial people. Of all the chilling and isolating spells of the world, none are more deadly to the Christian life than politics and trading : they are the foster-fathers of self-will and self-interest, and these lie at the root of our modern English character. It would be endless if I were to speak of the many tokens of this isolating temper,—such as the diversities of religious opinion ; the weakening of the bonds of unity ; the multiplication of schisms ; the crumbling subdivision of sects : or to show how even in her own bosom there is an uneasy teeming life which baffles and thwarts her efforts at united and vigorous action. I will make only one remark, and pass at once to a few particular instances which will recall our minds to the practical question I desire to set before you ; and that remark shall be this :—All foreign Churches, shielded as they have been from the storms which have broken upon their despised sister in England, and successful in their unrelenting strife against hearts that yearned for purities which they had not to give them, have declined and wasted. The countries most successful against the

Reformation, for instance, Spain and France, are the most destitute of Christianity. The most vigorous and promising rekindlings of life among them (which God prosper) are partial and precarious, the work of individual and often isolated minds, and sustained by the energy of individual character ;* but the English Church, tried beyond them all, has now more than ever shown a vivid and inextinguishable life, which quickens with an even pulse the whole of her extended system: she has retained what they have visibly lost—her hold upon the nation as a people, and her mastery over the highest intellectual natures.

But to go at once to our point: the first instance I will give of the loss sustained by the English Church in the struggles she has maintained with the temper of these latter times is that of her Synods and Councils for Canonical Legislation. I shall not wear out your patience by entering upon a statement of the nature and functions of the Councils convened by the Archbishops of each Province, nor of the Synods convened by the Bishops of every Diocese; nor of the mode by which their canons were wont to be incorporated in the law of the land; nor of the rise of Convocation,† and its ultimate subjection to the Crown; nor of its acts in the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries, and the suspension of its

* This is visibly true of Germany and France.

† See Archbishop Wake's *State of the Church*, chap. i.

legislative functions in the year 1719; nor will I speak of its formal assembling, even to this day, at the beginning of every new Parliament. It is not necessary to go into these historical points in such a place as this, where they must be well known to all. It is enough for us to remember that the whole work of developing and adapting herself to the condition of mankind, from the Council at Jerusalem to the acts of the Reformation, was wrought by the canonical legislation of the Church Catholic: her rules and laws being to the body of Christ what prudential maxims of personal and economical conduct in every stage and change of life are to each several man. They may be too numerous, too changeable and capricious; they may be unwise, inexpedient, contrariant to other customs to which they ought to be subject; and hence have followed at times confusion, and diversity, and irregularity, and consequent disobedience. And there can be nothing more dangerous than over-legislation in matters which reach the consciences and souls of men. The human will is a thing so weak and wayward that the loyalty and love of thousands might be forfeited by a mistake in judgment. All canonical legislation therefore needs to be checked by a gravity and a sanctity of heart, with a ripeness of wisdom and a mastery of self-will, which are seldom found in large assemblies of men. Who can doubt that by the suspension of the Church's legislative

powers we have been protected against ourselves? Under the strong and dominant impulses of feeling which have fluctuated in the English Church in the last hundred and fifty years, it would have been a miracle of mercy if she had taken no unwise and intemperate act of which we should now be inheriting the evil consequence. Yet, after all, it must be said that it is an anomalous and unwholesome state for a Church to have no canonical legislation at all. If the same power by which her legislative functions are suspended could bind down also the fleet and variable currents of human thought and feeling, and precipitate into a motionless form the fluctuations of national character; and if it could suspend also the manifold and mysterious workings of God's providence, under which an island people of five millions has swelled into an universal empire, and the whole face of social life has been elevated and depressed, and varied in every feature, as by the undulating pressure of a mighty flood; then, indeed, the Church might safely lay asleep her wise and watchful legislation. But is it not obvious that to this overlong suspension of her powers may be ascribed all that is sometimes alleged against her on the score of stiffness, and want of a self-adapting pliancy to meet the yearnings, and changed habits, and multiplied numbers of the people? Many of these objections are in fact without much meaning; but they point to where a hidden truth is lying.

There are true and reasonable and good desires and yearnings of heart to which at present she hardly makes the full reply : and who can say how much of what, as it is commonly so called, I will call Dissent, is owing to the unwilling inflexibility of her system, and to our inability to provide what we no less truly yearn to give than they to enjoy ? It is worthy of remark that the only great effort made in the last century to provide churches for the growing population of London and Westminster was made at the instance and petition of Convocation.* Had the Church really acted in Synod since that day, it is not to be believed that the 80,000 souls in Bethnal Green, or the million reported by the Commissioners, should have been left destitute of spiritual guides.†

Other consequences of this suspension are also worthy of a thoughtful consideration. There are left upon the roll of her canons many which through change of time can hardly be enforced. This is an evil in itself ; but it leads to a greater. Because the undisguised neglect of these is not censured, it is argued that those also which may yet be enforced and are most expedient have now no binding force. This touches the health of the conscience. I am not speaking of Ritual orders only : there are rules

* Wilkins's Concil., iv. p. 670, A.D. 1715.

† In London and the suburbs there are 34 parishes, with a population of 1,137,000, and church-room for only 101,682.—Second Report of the Eccl. Commiss., p. 59.

and precepts affecting the highest laws of morality, through the neglect of which the very sources of life are frightfully tainted, and the holiest ordinances of God are habitually profaned. "The spiritual power of the Church," says Hooker, "being such as neither can be challenged by right of nature, nor could by human authority be instituted, because the forces and effects thereof are supernatural and divine, we are to make no doubt or question but that from Him which is the Head it hath descended unto us that are the body now invested therewith. He gave it for the benefit of souls, as a mean to keep them in the path which leadeth unto endless felicity—a bridle to hold them within their due and convenient bounds, and, if they go astray, a forcible help to reclaim them. Now, although there be no kind of spiritual power for which our Lord Jesus Christ did not give both commission to exercise and direction how to use the same—although His laws in that behalf recorded by the Holy Evangelists are the only ground and foundation whereupon the practice of the Church must sustain itself; yet, as all multitudes, once grown to the form of societies, are even thereby naturally warranted to enforce upon their own subjects particularly those things which public wisdom shall judge expedient for the common good; so it were absurd to imagine the Church itself, the most glorious amongst them, abridged of this liberty; or to think that no law, constitution, or canon can be

further made either for limitation or amplification in the practice of our Saviour's ordinances, whatsoever occasion be offered through variety of times and things, during the state of this inconstant world, which bringeth forth daily such new evils as must of necessity by new remedies be redressed, did both of old enforce our venerable predecessors, and will always constrain others sometime to make, sometime to abrogate, and sometime to augment, and again to abridge sometime: in sum, often to vary, alter, and change customs incident into the manner of exercising that power, which doth itself continue always one and the same. I therefore conclude that spiritual authority is a power which Christ hath given to be used over them that are subject unto it, for the eternal good of their souls, according to His own most sacred laws, and the wholesome positive constitutions of His Church." *

And this brings me to the other instance—the decay and disuse of the Spiritual Courts.† It is well known that the jurisdiction of the Bishops' Consistory is partly in matters of a voluntary kind, as wills and licences, and partly contentious, reaching to the enforcement of Ecclesiastical duties and the correction of moral offences by penalties and

* Hooker's Eccl. Pol., vi. ii. [2.] ed. Keble.

† For their present state see the Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the practice of the Ecclesiastical Courts, 1830.

penance.* It is on the latter branch of the subject only that I will touch: and of that I will chiefly take what may be called the penitential office; both because it is the most important to the spiritual health of Christians, and because it is exactly in that point that the system of the courts has become least effective. I shall best express my meaning by taking as an example the Consistory Court of this Diocese. In this Court sat every Friday the Chancellor of the Bishop, or one of his Surrogates, with full power to try and punish all persons offending against religion and the ecclesiastical laws. In the Act Books or Books of Office are recorded the presentments for immorality made, according to their oath, by the Churchwardens. The offences presented appear as follows: cohabitation without marriage, incontinence, drunkenness, swearing, profaneness, suspicious conduct, "living," in the words of the presentment, "without any sense of God or religion, and leading a loose and idle life without going to Church."† A multitude of such cases might be cited from the seventeenth century and

* Report of the Commissioners appointed to inquire into the Practice and Jurisdiction of the Ecclesiastical Courts, p. 12.

† I could here adduce more than fifty precedents of such cases; and a closer examination of the Act Books of the last century would produce twice as many more; but the subject is too large to be treated in passing, and in such a form as is prescribed by the nature of a Charge. The last quotation is from a presentment made by the Churchwardens of Harting, March 19, 1724.

the first thirty years of the eighteenth. As we go on they become less frequent. The latest I know of a moral kind is in the year 1766; I will not say absolutely that no later case is to be found, for some may have escaped me; but I am the more confirmed in the belief that after that time the Court ceased to exercise its jurisdiction in matters of a moral nature, because thenceforward its adjournments were for longer and longer periods, and its main business, with the ordinary testamentary cases, was a sickening series of protracted and frivolous causes of defamation and slander.

A remarkable corroboration of this statement is given in the Report of the Commissioners appointed in the year 1830 to inquire into the state of the Ecclesiastical Courts. It there appears that, in the years 1827-8-9, in the Provincial and Diocesan Courts were tried 1903 causes—for Church seats, 190; for defamation, 331; in matters testamentary, 947: but the cases of correction of all kinds, probably hardly one for moral offences, are only 49.* And of 68 persons imprisoned in the same three years in consequence of proceedings in Ecclesiastical Courts, there are only two punished for immorality, and they were parties in one and the same case.† The Chichester Books of Office show no cases of penance, nor of excommunication and absolution, later than the year 1767.

* App. D. 11.

† App. D. 12.

As then, in the last instance, we may safely pronounce the state of the Church to be unnatural so long as it continues without canonical legislation, and yet be far from desiring to see an immediate restoration of its legislative powers in their present form; so in this case we must regard it as equally unnatural that she should be without any effective system of imposing spiritual correction for immoralities, although we may not desire to see the tedious and ineffective process of the Ecclesiastical Courts revived. It would seem that they sunk under their own weight; that their corrective functions fell into desuetude from the cumbrous, and, if I may so say, unspiritual character of their spiritual penalties. Nevertheless they were testimonies to the primary obligation of the Church to use a discipline of spiritual chastisement, and to take cognizance of the moral acts and character of her people. This indeed is of the essence of a faithful ministry. Let no one force on my words any meaning but my own. I am not desiring the restoration of penances which provoke ridicule and propagate a lower tone of moral feeling. But the Church cannot abdicate her prerogatives derived from Christ our Lord, without partaking in other men's sins. She cannot overlook their offences without in effect confounding the distinctions of immutable morality; without calling evil good, and good evil; without putting darkness for light, and light for darkness; bitter for

sweet, and sweet for bitter. Some of the worst forms of moral evil, some of the deadliest sins which destroy the soul of man, are of a kind of which the Civil courts take no cognizance. If then the Church shall neglect to do so, shall we not seem to declare absolute impunity for the worst offenders? But I leave it to your own minds to supply the instances. The first Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthian Church, and the Commination Service of our own, alike rebuke our present relaxed and neglected discipline. The earnest desire expressed in the Prayer Book is enough to satisfy all candid men that the Church laments the want of such a godly discipline—that she does not wink at the seeming impunity of her members, but bewails the want of deep humiliation and submissiveness of will, which alone hinder the restoration of this primitive order. And why should we shrink from saying that such a discipline is necessary both for the health of the Church and for averting the just anger of God, who is provoked by our lack of zeal for His offended laws? Surely, brethren, the sin of the Church, if she only admonish with weak words, and forbear to chastise with a searching discipline,—her sin, in His sight, must be as the sin of Eli. If she shall look on while her sons and her daughters offend against the awful purities of God, and yet, without note of blame, deceiving their souls, lavish upon them His high spiritual benedictions, wherein

are shadowed forth the mystery of Christ and his Church, she shall not be held guiltless before God, for that, when her children made themselves vile, she restrained them not. Every Parish Priest will know my meaning.

But I am not only speaking of the great multitude of our brethren, and of the traditionary evils which beset their early life : I speak also of all the flock which Christ hath committed to our charge. Wherever spiritual evil is to be detected, there it must be visited with chastisement ; and no respect of persons, no crouching regard of wealth or rank, may make us ever fear boldly to rebuke vice, and patiently, if need be, to suffer for the truth's sake. It is this part of our duty the Church yearly warns us to fulfil in the Collect for St. John Baptist's Day. Will not they that have eyes of faith to trace how the sins of nations and chastisements of God are intricately together in the interweavings of His stupendous moral government, see reason to believe that the heaviest of our national calamities are His permitted punishment for the overthrow of the spiritual discipline of the Church of Christ ? So at least believed a deeply learned and thoughtful writer of the 17th century, who, after seeing the Church trampled down, lived to see it restored under Charles the Second : " So long as the keys of the Church are not in force, that is, in use, for the restoring of sinners to her communion, upon presumption that they

are restored to grace, grounded upon the works of repentance which they show, it is a hard task to maintain the claim of Reformation in the Church; for the Church is founded upon the power of the keys. And therefore where that power is not in force * * * there it is a Church in hope and right rather than in deed and being. We publicly profess to seek the restoring of Penance, and, because we have not effectively sought that which we profess to seek, God hath brought on us that heavy judgment which we have felt. The marvellous work that He hath showed in thus restoring us obligeth all to lay it to heart, and never to give over the thought of it till by degrees it be restored in some measure. Christian souls perish because they know not what help they want; the blessing of the Church and the Communion of the Eucharist being ministered to all without difference.” *

Such, then, in these general features, is the present state of the English Church. She preserves in all its integrity the Apostolical deposit of the Faith and Polity; and the whole of her organic system is so incorporated with the common law of England, that there is no title to power or possession which can prescribe before her: but by the suspension of her living administrative power of legislation and correction, it is not to be denied that she is at a disadvantage in the task she has to fulfil as the Teacher and Guide of the People.

* Thorndike's *Weights and Measures*, p. 181.

The question then that I would propose to your consideration (and really my purpose is not so much to follow it out at this time as to ask your thoughtful attention to it) is, In what way can our Synodical Visitations be made in some measure to compensate for these suspended functions of the Church?

Certainly not by attempting any legislative or judicial powers which do not belong to them, but by keeping strictly within the limits prescribed by the Canons of the Church and by the common law of the land; and these fully empower the Ordinary and the Clergy to take any acts proper to a Visitation, or to a Chapter assembled for conference.

And first, by faithfully discharging the duties of the Visitation, an almost certain check is formally opposed to the tendency which depresses all ecclesiastical systems towards decay.

The Ordinary is bound by a grave responsibility to see that all things relating to the Church and services of Divine worship are sustained in a due and becoming state. For this purpose the articles of Visitation are issued, and the Churchwardens cited to return them duly filled, and to appear in person. If they on their part should be remiss, it becomes his duty in the Court of the Visitation to admonish them of their neglect, to specify the particulars of their duty, to assign a certain day by which they shall fulfil the monition, and certify the same to the

Bishop's Consistory Court, to which thenceforward they are transferred.*

* The following are precedents of monitions by the Archdeacon in Visitation, taken from the Chichester Visitation books:—

For Registers on Parchment, A.D. 1707.

Westborne.—Guard: exhib: præsent: et monit: fuer: ad exhibend: Regist^m. in pargam: intra proximam Curiam.

For Presentments. 1699.

Angmering.—Guard: Comp: jurat: et monit: ad exhibend: *Billam detectionis* intra Festum Sancti Michaelis Archangeli.

Amberley.—1736. Churchwardens sworn and admonished to exhibit a Presentment at or before Michaelmas.

For Repairs. 1717.

Bignor.—Guard: jurat: et monit: fuit. To repair the church-yard fence, now presented out of repair, before the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel now next coming, and to certify the same the next Court-day after the same feast.

Turwick.—Guard: jurat: et monit: fuit. To have the bell new cast and hung up before the next Visitation, and to certify the same at the next Visitation.

Arundell.—1714. Guard: Comp: et jurat: et monit: fuit ad exhibend: præsent: To provide a new church bible and common-prayer book, intra Festum S. Jacobi Apostoli et ad certif: prox: die Surrogato post eund: Festum.

Westborne.—1711. Guard: monit: fuit ad reparand: et intra Festum S. Mich. &c.

For the calling of a Vestry to make payments. 1734.

Tillington.—Churchwardens sworn and admonished as above, and also admonished to cause a public vestry to be duly called, and to see the accounts of William Bridger passed and allowed of, and to pay him what shall appear to be justly due to him thereon.

For the election of a Churchwarden. 1790.

Sompting.—On which day Mr. Archdeacon adjourned this business to the next Spiritual Court. No regular election ap-

And here I would address myself especially to that important body of Ecclesiastical officers, and remind them of the duties they have to perform, and the powers with which they are invested. Your duties, my Brethren, are not only to maintain the fabric of the Church in becoming repair, and all the furniture of the Church in a condition fit for the services of religion; but you are bound to preserve order during the time of Divine worship, and to take notice of the morals of your several parishes. You are bound to present to the Ordinary all persons who offend against religion and morality. It is no discharge to you that the Ecclesiastical Courts no longer proceed to cite the offenders to answer by legal process. That is the responsibility of the Bishop of the Diocese. It is yours to present, and his to consider of the steps to be taken upon your presentment. It is in the power, as assuredly it is the duty, of Churchwardens

peared, and therefore Mr. Archdeacon decreed a monition to be made out to elect Churchwardens, &c.

For parties to collect Church Rate and to appear in the Consistory Court. 1720.

Cocking.—Dominus assignavit Johanni Challen, Guard: ad colligend: tax: intra mensem prox: et monit: Guard: noviter elect: ad comparend: ad prox: curiam Consistor: Domini Episcopi, &c.

These precedents are all that I will cite, as I cannot pretend to do more in a note than support the assertion in the text. A great multitude of like precedents might be adduced, extending to all branches of the Ordinary's jurisdiction.

to render most effective assistance to their pastor in the moral discipline of his parish. It is by presentments only that the Bishop can obtain a full knowledge of the moral state of his Diocese; it is only upon the evidence of such moral statistics that any measure can be framed by the spiritual and civil powers to correct the detected evil; and it is therefore of the first importance that such presentments should still be made. Spiritual chastisement may yet be used: voluntary penance may still be imposed. It was by such a voluntary penitential system that the Church chastised her offending members for the first three hundred years: and certainly her spiritual health was never higher nor more vigorous than in those ages. I believe the whole body of my Reverend Brethren would tell you that I speak their wishes when I say that they would be grateful for your official aid in administering the moral discipline of their parishes; and that the weight of their pastoral admonitions would be indefinitely increased, if they could fall back upon the support of the Bishop of the Diocese following upon your formal official presentments.

On the part of your duties which relates to the repair of the fabric it may be as well to say, that by the judgment lately given in the Court of Exchequer Chamber by the Lord Chief Justice Tindal, speaking in the name of the Judges, it is laid down that the parish is bound by common law to repair

the fabric of the Church :^{*} that the power of the Vestry is not to determine whether they shall repair or not, but to make a rate for the repairs which are necessary :[†] that the ultimate judge of such necessity is the Ecclesiastical Court :[‡] that the Churchwardens, having summoned a Vestry, even though no rate-payer should attend, may lawfully proceed then and there to make the required rate. § It may be well also to remind Churchwardens that the new Churchwarden cannot make a rate to reimburse the old. If the Churchwarden of last year should neglect to reimburse himself for the outlay he has made, he is liable in law to the full amount expended.

Let me, however, counsel you, not only for these, but for other most important reasons, to be punctual in making a yearly rate, however small it be. For by the neglect of this duty, often evaded by Churchwardens out of a desire to save themselves the trouble of the office they have solemnly undertaken to perform, first, an accumulated decay is suffered to take place in the fabric of the Church, and then an accumulated cost of repair is some day or other thrown on one generation of rate-payers. And hence almost justly arise complaints and opposition

^{*} Judgment delivered in the Braintree case, p. 4. Rivingtons, 1841.

[†] Ibid., p. 7.

[‡] Ibid., p. 19.

§ Ibid., pp. 9, 10.

I need hardly add that the trick for evading church-rates by adjourning for six months is illegal; no such amendment can lawfully be put by the chairman of any vestry.

not to be wondered at. It would be sheer idleness and folly, if it were not something really much worse, I mean irreverent and irreligious neglect of God's house, to suffer decay and dilapidation; to gain a head. We all know what heavy costs of repair a little timely reparation will prevent. And on behalf of the rate-payers I claim of you a faithful discharge of this part of your office. The first act of the newly elected Churchwarden ought to be to call a Vestry, and to lay before them an estimate of the current charges for providing for the services of the Church, and of the repairs necessary to sustain the building; and upon that estimate to make a rate which shall carry him through his year's office. To neglect this may save him trouble, and gain a momentary popularity, which will before long be turned into just and reasonable complaints by the body of rate-payers, who will have some day to bear an accumulated outlay as the penalty of his neglect. Let no Churchwarden therefore shift his own duties on the shoulders of his successor. Above all, let him beware of the selfishness of neglecting the house of God because he thinks it will last his day. Too many who have gone before you have so thought and acted, and they have made your present burdens all the heavier. A little more of the same sinful negligence, and we should hardly have any Parish Churches standing. If you act as they did, your children will have none to worship in.

I need not assure the body of the Churchwardens that I shall be ready at all times to do whatsoever my office requires to advise and to support them in their duties; and it is my intention to visit in person every Parish Church in the Archdeaconry, for which I trust they will be prepared.

In the next place, my Reverend Brethren, by regarding these our customary meetings as the public and solemn Chapter of the Archdeaconry, we shall be able to exercise through them some of the most important functions of a deliberative character.

In this view they are the keystone of the work begun by our late revered Father in God. In restoring the Chapters of the Rural Deaneries he did but carry out into detail the great principle which is involved in the Visitation of this day. Every Rural Dean exercises his office of Visitation and holds his Chapter; these functions are the prolonging of the last Visitation in this place, and a preparation for the next.

And thus these more general and authoritative Chapters afford the most fitting opportunities of making publicly known to the Clergy all acts of the supreme legislature and sentences of the Ecclesiastical or Civil Courts, which bear upon the duties of our pastoral office and the discipline of the Church at large: such, for instance, as the judgment lately given in the Arches Court of Canterbury by Sir

Herbert Jenner, in the case of *Mastin versus Escott*, for refusing to bury an infant baptised by a Wesleyan minister. The occasion of this question arose from no ill-feeling on the part of the defendant. He, and many other Clergy of the Church, felt themselves embarrassed by conscientious scruples as to the validity of baptism administered by unordained men. They had no definition of the English Church to guide them. They saw that since the Reformation measures had been taken to repress the practice of unauthorized baptisms. They felt that the judgment delivered in the former Court by the late Sir John Nicholl, in the year 1809,* was not sufficient, because in that judgment were incorporated arguments respecting the intention of the words "a lawful minister," which, however they may accord with an Erastian view of the case, can never be admitted by any branch of the Church Catholic.† In the present instance, Sir Herbert Jenner has confirmed the judgment of Sir John Nicholl; but upon a broader ground. The learned judge decided "that the Church has not considered the minister as an essential part of the Sacrament of Baptism." "It is very desirable," he added, "that he should be present to administer it, and highly improper, excepting in cases of absolute necessity, that it should be administered by any other person,

* Phillimore's Reports, vol. iii. *Kemp v. Wickes*.

† Ibid., p. 297.

who in so doing usurps an office which does not belong to him; is meddling with things which are not within his vocation, and therefore is liable to censure and to punishment.”* The essential conditions of valid baptism, he was of opinion, are the form and the matter, or in other words water, wherein the person is baptised in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. “It seems to me,” he added, “upon the whole of this case, that the law of the Church is, beyond all doubt, that a child baptised by a layman is validly baptised.”† The sentence prescribed by the 68th canon, namely, three months’ suspension, was accordingly pronounced, and notice of appeal was immediately given.

Now, it is not my intention to express any opinion on the soundness of this reasoning. I may, however, remark that it proceeds upon a visible distinction between valid and lawful baptism. The “*factum valet*” is a point of dogmatic theology into which I would not willingly enter at this time: the “*feri non debuit*” is a point of practical administration involving the first principles of unity and subordination; whether such baptisms are ruled to be *valid* or no, it is plain that they are already ruled to be *unlawful*. And this indicates to us the duty of taking care that our flocks shall be rightly taught

* Curteis’s Report of the case of Mastin v. Escott, p. 283. 1841.

† Ibid., 286.

and guided as to the nature and obligations of parochial unity.

One more instance I will cite, namely, the judgment given by the Lord Chief Justice in the Court of Queen's Bench, in the case of the Dean of York. The rule was made absolute to prohibit the Archbishop of York from proceeding or continuing to give effect to the sentence of deprivation which he had pronounced against the Dean. Into the details of the question I need not at all enter: the prohibition was made absolute on the ground that no criminal proceedings may be instituted against any clerk in holy orders, except under the statute of 2 and 3 Victoria, c. 86; and that the Archbishop did not proceed under that statute, but by the ordinary powers of Visitor.* The case is important chiefly as attesting the earnest desire of the Church to purge herself of all irregularity, and the necessity of restoring an harmonious and effective system of corrective discipline. The above-cited statute was framed for the express purpose of facilitating the process of punishing criminality in the clergy. The direct intention of its framers was, doubtless, to develop and render efficient one main function of the Episcopal jurisdiction. They had no purpose of suspending, by its collateral effects, any other powers of correction, whether by Visitation or otherwise. Such, however, has been its undesigned effect: and all that the Church, in the person of the venerable

* Law Report. Times newspaper, June 21, 1841.

Primate who promoted this cause, can do, is to endure to be baffled by a technical defence, where the moral dignity of the Church has been so nobly vindicated. But I may pass from what this Act has done to what it has failed to do. It has failed to invest the Bishop acting *in foro domestico* with such powers as shall reach the commoner cases of delinquency, and that failure is to be ascribed, not so much to any imperfection in the Act, so far as it professes to go, but to the want, which pervades our law, of exact definitions as to the nature of Ecclesiastical offences. This is matter on which the Act does not touch ; but, assuming the existing definition, it facilitates only the process of reaching them. These definitions must be derived from the canonical legislature of the Church. It is well to bear these things in mind, lest the Church should be suspected of conniving at offences which the supreme legislature has not invested her with adequate powers of correcting. It is one of the greatest trials to bear with the natural impatience, and not unreasonable suspicion, of those who would hold her guilty for not doing what they can hardly help assuming she must be able to effect ; and to see at times—though, God be praised, not often—men whom she would fain repudiate as yet bearing her most sacred offices.

I have thought it not amiss to suggest to you these two points for your reflection, because they involve the relations of the spiritual and civil power, and bear directly upon our character and duties.

And now, to turn to matters of a more personal sort, I would further suggest how, by using these opportunities for conference together, we shall be able in many most important ways to develop the system of the Church, and adapt its existing provisions to the condition of the people. And this we may do by an uniform restoration of the rules and order to which we are already pledged. We have no need of new Rubrics and Canons:—those which we possess are amply sufficient to guide our practice for many years to come. And we may count this a gracious provision; for to fall back upon rules already determined is far safer than to embark on the wide and wandering sea of discussion and debate: all that we need is uniformity in our practice. It is of the very first moment that our Pastoral administration should in its main points be alike. And surely these our solemn meetings ought to dispose us strongly towards such an uniformity of practice. It is hardly possible for us to come from our several parishes to these public assemblies without feeling the over-ready disposition of our minds to form our own particular systems, checked by the consciousness that we are one of a large fellowship of pastors. We are constrained to feel that, as by every deviation on our part from the rule and order of the Church we must surely weaken our own hands, so by every visible discrepancy, much more by every opposition to the practice of our Brethren, we should but weaken each other. A body of men

united by one common will, and guided by one common rule of practice, is morally irresistible. As, for instance, what is it that gives to excommunication its absolute power, but its universality? what but that the sinner excommunicated in one Parish Church is excommunicated in all? If it were possible for an offender excommunicated in one parish to communicate in another, all discipline must fall to the ground. It is by this uniform restoration of the rules and orders of the Church in this and in all other points of our parochial system that we shall render our Pastoral ministry best able to meet the condition of our people. It is not to be told what would be gained to the Church, by such a course, in unity, consistency, strength, and moral dignity. Even where we are compelled, most inflexibly, to cross the wills of our people, they would not fail to respect our firmness, and to be half convinced, by our unanimous action, that there must be some good and sufficient cause for our steadfast uniformity. Variations are a proof of indifference, and no ambiguous intimation of something worse. Like personal irresolution and inconsistency, they shake our confidence and mar our respect. I will not touch upon any particulars in which this may be the most readily carried out into effect: we shall be able to consider hereafter at our leisure, and in detail, how we may best merge our individual schemes in the harmonious action of a common system. The detailed application of this principle we

may refer to the Rural Chapters. And this leads me to one more point.

We have considered how these Visitations offer a formal compensation for some of the suspended functions of the Church; and I would trespass on you a little longer, to suggest how they tend to fulfil its highest aim, by their moral power and effect.

I have rather hinted than pointed out how they serve to produce uniformity in our practice; and I am prepared to hear it said that uniformity without unity is a hollow and lifeless thing. This is granted as soon as said. But will not a thoughtful, much more a philosophical mind, detect something trivial and unmeaning in this rhetorical way of opposing unity and uniformity, as if they were two ideas, almost two repugnant things, instead of the outward and inward, the visible and invisible form of one and the same reality? But even though they were things separable, uniformity even without unity is at least better than discrepancy added to disunion. If we were indeed so shorn of the spirit of grace as to lack inward unity among ourselves, still there is no reason why we should inflict the visible tokens of our disunion upon the flocks committed to our charge. But, after all, is it not certain that uniformity is the silent and symbolical language of unity? Is there any law in God's works which has not its own invariable form? What is the variety of nature but the uniform expression of a variety of laws, not a various expression of any

one law? Do not laws of relation, and proportion, and symmetrical figure pervade all the works of God with a severe and unerring uniformity? It is absolutely certain that, wheresoever there is unity in the idea, there will also be uniformity in the expression; and in all things which have life the converse is also true. Dissolution of parts will break up the uniformity of organized bodies, but it is only after the life is fled. It will linger a while in testimony of what it was, and then dissolve into multitude and variety. But there is no such thing as unity of life without an uniformity of structure and a harmony of operations: and, in all moral action, uniformity of practice is not only a symbol but a means to unity of will. If it were only in this mediate and remoter way, these days of meeting together would tend to knit us in a most intimate bond of fellowship. But they have a far higher and more searching power. We come here, not to satisfy a mere Ecclesiastical obligation, but to join with one another in the most sacred acts of faith. We began this day with united worship, which is a posture of the human will most favourable to unity of heart. If men cannot be united by common worship, then assuredly nothing can make them one. And is it not worthy of some reflection that these are the only acts of united worship in which the Clergy, as a body, are ever permitted to partake? They are the only solemn intercessions offered with one accord by the assembled pastors of the Church.

We have joined together in that office which best disposes the wills of men to unity ; but we have not enjoyed a participation in that hallowed action by which the wills of men are most deeply and energetically united. There is something still lacking to bring us to a common centre. We have not enjoyed to-day, nor as a body do we ever enjoy, the fellowship of that central light, and pervading life, and immortalizing bond of the mystical body of Christ. In this I must note our gathering of to-day imperfect. There is one thing yet lacking ; and the arch of our spiritual unity is still untied.

But this too is not far off. All things about us bespeak the workings of His gracious presence raising up the English branch of His Catholic Church for some great work of charity to mankind. Else, how, after all our sins and provocations, should there be a reviving of brotherly love, and a returning upon our old paths? A desire for unity is a token that He is with us. On us first of all He turns His chastening hand. We are set as a sign to His elect. He is purifying the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.* It is in our unity that the Church must be united ; and it is in her unity that she will find her strength. Her dominion rests upon the powers of the human will ; and that which gives to her an irresistible might is the unity of a multitude of harmonious wills. What was it that mastered the world and won the Empire

* Mal. iii. 3.

to the Cross, but the miracle of Catholic unity? There is a strange power in a single isolated will, when its aim is fixed and its action consistent; but a multitude of wills bearing steadily on one line and purpose is irresistible.

I have spoken of the legal privileges and functions of the Church, but before the powers of human law were with her she had rested three hundred years upon the will of regenerate man. Let us never forget that the Church developed herself in all the earth, corrected her spiritual children, and knit mankind in one by the inherent power of her inextinguishable life. It was for self-support that the empire of the world embraced the Catholic fellowship. It was for its own regeneration that it turned canons into laws, and invested the Bishops of Christendom with the insignia of judicial power. What was that complex phenomenon of spiritual and civil authorities but the manifestation in due time of the Fatherhood of God, vested in the kingly and prophetic offices of His Son, typified in the Patriarchal rule, foreshadowed in the royal and priestly lines of Israel, and fulfilled in the blending of Universal Empire with the Catholic Church of Christ? The lingering traces of this great phenomenon are among us still. Let us reverently ponder them, for they are divine: let us heedfully cherish them, for they are the pledged hopes of national regeneration. Let us fear under any provocation to hasten by one hour the weakening of any bond, or

the effacing of any legendary token of this heaven-wrought mystery. But let us not forget that the strength of the English Church is not there. It is where it was before the baptism of Constantine—where it shall be, though all the thrones of earth were apostate as the throne of Julian. Her strength is in the inflexibility of a holy will; in sanctity working through charity and unity upon the conscience and heart of England. Her true strength under God is in the millions of the people. Her mission is to be the guide of souls, the almoner of the poor, the comforter of afflicted hearts. And it is our task to make her loved for her healing sympathy, and feared for her visible holiness. It is not coercion, nor worldly power, nor the favour of legislatures, nor political rallyings, but charity, that must bind men's hearts to us. If we show them that we have peace, and healing, and consolation for their world-worn and weary souls, their very miseries will make them cling to our embrace. Only, if we would win the hearts of men, let us be worthy of their affections; let us take heed that none go empty away—that none come hungering and draw back unsatisfied. Let us pray God to make us yearn over our brethren of the separation; to know what is the secret of their alienated wills, and how to win back their hearts.

No watchful eye can fail to see in the sects around the Church how much of purity and goodness lies struggling for escape from the bondage of imperfect

Christianity. There is a sympathy in high and pure minds drawing them to her bosom. Brethren, we have not deserved it; nor is it the force of our spiritual attraction which beckons them towards us. It is the strong craving of man's spirit for stillness amid the strife of tongues; for the interior calm of God's sanctuary, where the echoes of conflicting sects can no more be heard; for the shelter of some steadfast polity; for something above themselves on which to lean and be at peace. O let us for the love of Christ beware lest by sloth, or strife, or coldness, we check their drawings nigh—lest to their sympathy with Christ's Church we oppose the apathy of our individual minds.

We are charged with the fulfilment of no light commission. Every year has brought out into a broader outline the destiny of the English Church. Can we doubt that she has been reserved, and is now raised up for some great movement among the nations of the earth? It may be she shall build again the Tabernacle that is fallen down, and purify the Catholic world. Who can be familiar with her true character and not read the admonitions of her Divine Master? Who can see that she is primitive and yet purified; the treasury of things new and old; having the ripeness of age and the vigour of a new-born youth: that she is, as it were, the link of the past and of the future, a central point between the old world and the new: and how, in all the inclinations of Western Christendom to one or

other of the great religious extremes, she has been impelled forward in a middle path: and how the power of faith which is on the one side, and the more positive system which is on the other, have both in her a share and sympathy: and how at every ebb and flow of religious life the minds of men have subsided and settled down nearer and nearer to that rule of Faith which was confessed and vindicated in the Anglican restoration of Catholic truth: and how at this time she is standing out in a bolder relief, and stamping her own character in all the world-wide precinct of the British Empire:—who, I ask, can ponder these things, and not feel a consciousness stronger than all reasoning, that, if she be loyal to her heavenly Lord, she shall be made glorious in His earthly kingdom as the regenerator of the Christendom that seems now dissolving, and the centre of a new Catholic world?

There is a life rising through all her branches, and thrusting itself forth in energy and promise, and it is for us to guide and to develop it. It is for us, under God, to perfect her internal organization—to elicit zeal, to concentrate energy, to draw forth and distribute the heaven-born instincts of high and devoted hearts, to subjugate even enthusiasm to a healthy though vehement action. The Church has a manifold office of charity—she needs minds of every cast, and characters of every bias. They cannot rise and throng upon her too fast. She can well employ them all. Be-

side the altar, or in the outer courts, or on the walls of Zion, or by the sheepfolds, there are a thousand ministries to be fulfilled. The sins and the sufferings of mankind are manifold, and she has a balm in store for each. She has the softness of religious charity to temper the strength of a masculine faith. She is the symbol and the channel of that living mysterious sympathy by which the Word made flesh gladdens and heals the spirits of a fallen world. All she needs is an internal organization which shall give outlet and guidance to the strong currents of human character; and unity which shall make them harmonious in their many movements, and hold them all in one.

And this is our daily function; each by his own altar perfecting the unity and order of his flock: and there shall go forth from the lowliest parish church a virtue and a sympathy which shall quicken the whole body of Christ.

If I have not wholly failed to show how these our yearly gatherings tend to unfold and perfect this life and power of the Church, I shall be content. And may our great High Priest shed abroad on us the grace of wisdom and of love to use them for this end.

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